

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 150 229

UD 017 916

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 TITLE A Model Involving the Public's Perception of Busing.
 PUB DATE [77]
 NOTE 28p.
 EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$2.06 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Black Education; *Bus Transportation; *Content Analysis; *Integration Methods; *Models; *Negative Attitudes; *Public Opinion; Racism; Role Perception; School Integration

ABSTRACT

In this review of the effect of busing the methodology used is a content analysis of articles and documents from educational journals, the New York Times, and transcripts of Congressional Hearings. An analysis of these sources revealed that the bulk of the material is often confusing sometimes contradictory, and usually unsubstantiated. The primary objections which have been raised against busing fall into four categories: (1) the neighborhood school concept, (2) the educational benefit concept, (3) the social experimentation concept, and (4) busing used as a symbol of racism. The public's negative perception of the impact of busing can be summarized as a combination of a loyalty to the defunct but still popular concept of the neighborhood school, the confusion created by lack of knowledge as to the precise educational effect to be derived from an integration program that uses busing, an unsettled feeling created by those who perverted the meaning of one of the important purposes of desegregation and busing by branding it "social experimentation", and the impact of a widespread racism disguised in the symbol of the bus. (Author/AM)

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A MODEL INVOLVING THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF BUSING

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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INTRODUCTION

The most divisive issue in American society today is the propriety, the morality, of transporting children for the purposes of racial desegregation. Controversy over transporting is not new, it has been entwined with American educational history since long before the Civil War. From that time until 1954, the argument revolved around the practice of transporting Negro children for the purpose of segregating public schools. The emotionalism attendant on this practice has been noted in a letter-to-the-editor by Alvin Lebar in ¹ the New York Times:

Having attended a white segregated school in the early 1930's...I recall vividly an old rickety bus stopping each morning and returning at dusk to pick up and deliver two black children who lived on the fringe of our neighborhood...The bus...filled with Negro children [was] destined for a black school as far as thirty miles from home.

Such busing formed a common pattern throughout the South prior to 1954 and few complaints were heard about the sanctity of the neighborhood school system now supported with almost religious fervor.

After 1954, the public attitude toward the utilization of transportation went through a dramatic metamorphosis. Whereas transportation was universally accepted for separating races; when it began to be used for the mixing of the races it suddenly became anathema to many people. This use of transportation elicited many reactions, some in support and many in opposition, all of which are usually termed in the strongest possible language. Lebar ended his letter with a strongly worded plea to accept the transportation of students ² for the purpose of integration:

It may well be that busing of students for racial purposes is wrong and upsets lives and even that 'two wrongs do not make a right' but in all fairness, it is made to appear far more wrong to bus a white child even a short distance to effect integration than it was to bus a black child much greater distances to preserve segregation.

PURPOSE

An examination of the reasons given when many people express opposition to busing is the purpose of this article. What reasons are offered as arguments for and against busing? What type of evidence is offered in support of these arguments? What type of person uses a particular argument? Finally, is it possible to classify the arguments in such a fashion as to facilitate an understanding of the "Great School Bus Controversy" of the 1960's and 70's?³

When attempting to review commentary in the area of the public perception of busing, one runs into severe problems due to the paucity of previous scholarly study. As far as I have ascertained, the only rather thorough study conducted in an organized manner is one produced by the United States Civil Rights Commission and it can not be regarded as scholarly since it gives little substantiation to its interpretations.⁴ On a more general level, an incredible amount of material has been produced by numerous sources: Politicians, educators, social scientists, pro and anti-busing organizations, and private citizens have all offered individual or group analyses of the perceived effects of busing for desegregation.

For example, as early as 1964 busing had become such a volatile issue that political figures were constructing elaborate rationales for or against its utilization. Senator Keating of New York, reacting to the building storm within the New York City School System, commented that busing "...diverted attention from real problems, ...was too costly, ...emotionally harmed children, ...[and] was destructive of the neighborhood school."⁵ Agreeing with Senator Keating was the United States Parent Association of New York, one of the first formally organized anti-busing groups, who said "...the answer to the problem is to improve schools not shuffle children around."⁶ Concurrent to the growth of the situation in New York were the

development of controversies and arguments over busing in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

The Philadelphia Board of Education released a policy statement which contended that busing would "...relieve overcrowding within the city's schools and speed the desired integration process." ⁷ At the same time, the Pittsburgh Board of Education under the guidance of Dr. S. P. Marland repudiated a previous policy statement which had contended that busing would "...result in serious problems in after school programs, ...could not be done because of the difficulty in grouping students for pick-up, ...and high school schedules would suffer because of bus schedules." ⁸ This repudiation caused immediate reaction from the North Side Parent's Association which "...opposed...school busing because it results in delinquency and dropouts." ⁹ The number of such examples could be endless; from an endless number of sources ranging from government officials to private citizens. The quality of commentaries range from thoughtful and sincere to completely absurd. The beliefs of Elliot Richardson "...that the use of busing to achieve racial balance in public schools can be educationally counterproductive," ¹⁰ is matched by the "indisputable" proof offered by the president of an organization called Save Our Country that busing directly caused the rapid increase in venereal disease within our urban centers. ¹¹

As a review of this commentary, we shall offer some representative statements from various segments of society which will demonstrate: (1) the content of the commentary as presented is confused, unclear, and sometimes contradictory and (2) though confused in presentation, the commentary does have a sense of continuity around certain themes. The review of the commentary should enable us to propose a model in which the bulk of the commentary might be classified. Upon establishment of this model, it is

hoped that further research might seek to inquire as to why each of the component segments of the model are important to the development of the public's perception of busing.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology to be employed is that of a content analysis of articles and documents from several sources. First, educational journals and general periodicals were searched through the use of the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, the Education Index, and similar indices to produce approximately 250 articles which seemed pertinent to a study of the perception of busing.

The second important source for data for this study was the New York Times. From this newspaper an attempt was made to obtain first-hand accounts of statements made by significant individuals at the scene of some of the important locales in which busing controversies have taken or are taking place. The New York Times was chosen because: (1) it is one of the few truly national newspapers available in the country, and (2) it is one of few newspapers which is functionally indexed over the necessary period of time.

The third, and perhaps most important, source of data are the transcripts of the Congressional Hearings which dealt with the various proposed anti-busing amendments and the proposed Educational Opportunity Act and Student Transportation Moratorium Act of 1972. They are important because they provide, in one source, and, in great detail, the expressed views of most of the pertinent figures who have commented on busing as a tool of desegregation.

THE COMMENTARY

An outstanding characteristic one finds when examining the pro and anti-busing statements of many private citizens is the over-use of emotionalism and the under-utilization of fact and specificity. An excellent example of this is the testimony of Mrs. James Farrell of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, before the House Hearings On School Busing in 1972. In her statement she made several points which relate to her perception of the impact of busing as an instrument of desegregation. Her points were:

- (1) busing is a tool that is being used by appointees not interested in the welfare of our country or our people, to destroy our youth.
- (2) busing is an insult to the intelligence of every man, woman, and child in this country.

The bulk of Mrs. Farrell's argument rests on the belief that busing, in some unspecified manner, is destroying the nation's youth, and that the act of busing is an insult to intelligence.

In a letter to Jesse Helms, Jack Williams (the Governor of Arizona), states "...I share your deep concern...the damage which these decisions... have caused to our young people is yet still undetermined but I am persuaded...they will horrify even the most convinced social planner...we cannot afford to sacrifice the health of our young people and communities for the sake of racial...balance." These statements are examples of typical rationales which demonstrates the ambiguity and emotion often found in many statements dealing with the busing issue.

Commentary on busing has been given by both local and national governmental officials. William Poe, the chairman of the Charlotte/Mechlenburg Board of Education gave a well-balanced statement of the pros and cons of busing before the 1972 House School Bus Hearings. In his statement he delineated what he perceived as the several positive and many negative

effects of busing. One negative effect he discussed was the increased expense incurred by the system due to the imposition of busing for desegregation. Commenting on that expense, he stated:

Busing across a large metropolitan area such as Charlotte/Mechlenburg is a very expensive and very cumbersome operation. Doubling the size of the largest school bus fleet in the state of North Carolina overnight with no additional funds to pay the bill has been a terribly hard task...busing today is unquestionably siphoning off revenues needed for the improvements in our educational programs.

Poe also expressed concern about the need to send students to schools other than the ones closest to their homes:

...students assigned to attend schools located a considerable distance from their homes have suffered problems not only of inconvenience but also of orientation and adjustment, and have often withheld their loyalty and allegiance to these schools, adding considerably to in-school discipline problems.

This disorientation has purportedly contributed to an increase in the number of serious disruptions within the individual schools.

serious disruptions have occurred within a number of our high schools resulting in the imposition of rigid codes of students behavior and monitoring of halls and restrooms by teachers and staff.

In addition, the schedule for extra-curricular activities has been severely altered, if not eliminated because of the implementation of the busing program.

Poe presents some discussion relating busing vis-a-vis the community's reaction to the program and a discussion of the impact busing has had upon the management of the schools. He contended that the continuance of the educational program has necessitated the implementation of in-service training programs. The busing program has created overcrowding in some of the Charlotte schools and this will necessitate the beginning of a massive and expensive construction program. Commenting on the public's perception of the social impact of the program, he notes that problems of

public acceptance, both within the schools by students and in the community by the citizenry, increases as a function of the increase in busing.

Bringing equality to the system has created problems not only on the ride between the schools; but, in addition, problems of peer acceptance within the schools:

providing a means of racial representation in student organizations, class and student body offices, and other activities has created some very delicate and fundamental problems. The whole concept of guaranteed representation is difficult for people to understand and even more difficult for them to accept willingly.

Acceptance within the community has been even more difficult:

...constant complaints come from some areas of the country where people contend that the busing burden is greater than in other parts of the country...No one wants anymore of the busing burden than anyone else, and everyone is quick to find out what their neighbor's burden is...busing as a primary tool for desegregation, has not been accepted generally by school patrons because they know that this technique has not been applied universally throughout the country.

Poe's commentary was not entirely negative. Citing some beneficial results, he listed six benefits he believes have been derived as the result of introducing busing into the Charlotte school system. He first noted a general improvement in the educational climate:

the problems that have arisen in the academic area are being dealt with through the use of various instructional techniques such as team teaching, curriculum revision, and some individualized instruction where the personnel are available.

Further, he pointed out the creation of an enhanced environment for social interaction:

...students have been able to associate more frequently with classmates who come from different ethnic backgrounds and cultural patterns, and thus have gained a better understanding of one another. In many instances though, it should be said that acute awareness of racial differences has resulted from this exposure.

Thirdly, a more general acceptance by the populace has resulted as indicated by an increase in the public's participation in school affairs:

...those families that have stuck with the public schools seem to have shown increased interest in them, as evidenced by large numbers of volunteers who have helped in various ways...about 4000 volunteers now work in our schools.

And finally, an increase in the efficiency with which the school system has
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implemented the entire desegregation program:

...the professional staff has sought to respond in new and different ways to challenge and meet the needs of our youngsters from divergent backgrounds...

there has been an increased awareness of the needs of some of our schools, and greater efforts are being made to achieve greater educational opportunities all over the system...

In summary, Poe's testimony clearly and judiciously demonstrates that an interpretation of the impact busing has had upon the Charlotte/Mechlenburg Public Schools can be presented using factual rather than emotional insight.

On the national level, governmental officials have made statements as to the impact of busing on various forums in various forms. Some excellent examples are the statements made for public consumption by various United States Congressmen. Representative William Minshall of Ohio published excerpts from correspondence he had received from his constituents on the subject of busing. The responses he received covered the spectrum of possible perceptions of the effect of busing. One letter notes the disruption to
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community life effected by busing:

...it removes children too far from parents in case of sickness or accident...it breaks up the PTA...it breaks down the family structure...it's expensive...it's a violation of the Civil Right's Act of 1964...

Another writer attacks the judicial process which has implemented many of
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the busing programs:

...it's high time we stopped federal judges from making law...

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A third comment on the effect of removing the child from the local school:

...being taken from home can be traumatic for children...this will not solve our problem...

Hinting that education can not remove the limitations imposed by racial
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origin, a fourth writer states:

...massive busing can not possibly overcome the retardation of black,
yellow, or white children...

A final letter demonstrates the role fear plays in the comments of many critics: 30

...the...thing that scares me about busing is the safety of my child
may be threatened...

The bulk of the letters cited reiterate these and similar concerns without the
benefits of much evidence. While the statement gives us a clear view of
the concerns that the congressman's constituents have, it gives us an equally
clear view as to the total lack of evidence that the correspondents use to
substantiate these views.

One of the most sophisticated discussions of the reasons for busing dissent
was presented by Representative William Bray of Indiana. In his statement,
he delineates what he considers to be the most important objection raised
against the use of busing. That issue which he speaks most strongly about
is the perception of busing as a social experiment. He characterizes this
problem when he says "...it is social engineering at its most reckless
and irresponsible." 31 Expanding upon this point, he claims that busing is
a continuation of the older melting pot theme; a theme which Bray contends
has become inoperative. Quoting William Raspberry, a respected Negro
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columnist with the Washington Post, he states:

If white people, either because they wish to avoid contact with
black people or for any other reason, choose to move far from where
most Black people live, does it make sense-in terms of education or
common sense to send Black kids chasing after them?

...they start off with the assumption that in melting pot America
racial integration is a good thing. But they take the melting pot
metaphor altogether too serious...

He concludes his discussion of busing as a social experiment with a quote
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from Bayard Rustin:

...there never was a melting pot. There never will be a melting pot. If there ever were, it would be such a tasteless soup we would have to go and start all over.

Where does this desire and urge come from, that would dissolve, without trace, in vats of sociological acid, the diversity that is the wonder and, indeed, the glory of the human race? Is this dream of dismantling individuality a preliminary step on the road to a hideously enforced collectivism of mind and will? This does not offer utopia; this is a version of hell.

Congressman Bray's article presents an eloquent discussion of one of the often intoned arguments against busing, namely, that it is being done as much to provide a laboratory for social experimentation as it is being done for the purpose of improving the education of the children involved. The article, while not being a total discussion of the pros and cons of the "social" experiment theme, does offer certain evidence in support of its case; in particular, the rethinking of James Coleman, principal author of the often quoted "Coleman Report."

The problem of unsubstantiated argument is found more often in the presentations offered by private individuals and government officials than it is found in the statements of professional educators. Two articles, one by Ewald Nyquist and the other by Michael Bakalis (the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools) demonstrate the degree of precision and substantiation rarely found in the comments of non-educators. Nyquist's article was introduced as evidence to the 1972 Senate Hearings on Busing by Stephen Horn (the Vice-Chairman of the United States Civil Rights Commission). His submitted statement was comprised of several contentions. He noted that research had proven that the academic achievement of minority students
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suffered in an segregated setting:

...results of current research clearly indicates that schools isolated on the basis of race may be decidedly harmful to the academic achievement of their students. It must be said too that racial isolation is part of the broader problem of social class isolation.

In addition, he cited evidence which lent credence to the proposition that
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integration improves academic achievement:

...the studies of over 50 school integration programs generally substantiate the positive effects of integration reported in the more representative national and regional studies of the issue...

Furthermore, he pointed out that the integration process clearly had the social effect of breaking the vicious circle of poor achievement as perpetuated by a poor home environment:
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...when lower statused students are transferred to schools with predominantly upper-statused students the evidence suggests that the continuance of residence in a lower-statused neighborhood will not interfere with the achievement gain that is to be expected as the result of attending school with predominantly upper-statused students...

Finally, integration and busing positively effected the societal goal of
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improving race relations and ameliorating racial prejudice:

...in integrated schools the aspirations and self-esteem of black students are positively effected...the findings of national and local studies generally indicate that the integrated school setting generally improves interracial understanding between the Negro and the white students...transfer of the minority child to schools with predominantly majority students is more likely to help his/her education...

Dr. Bakalis stated that busing was the only effective tool that could
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actualize the goals of integration:

...the evidence of the effects of segregation can no longer be disputed...we know conclusively as the result of segregation the motivation of the minority child to learn may diminish, their self-esteem and self-concept may be irreparably damaged if not destroyed; and their educational and mental development severely handicapped. And we know as a certainty that too many minority children are denied equal educational opportunities which impairs their access to the American mainstream...a high price is paid by any child, be he black or white, who goes through his/her entire school career without meeting a child or teacher of another racial

or ethnic background, or learning to value the enriching potential that culture holds for his own education...

These examples illustrate that arguments for and against busing when presented by educators, thought still tainted with biased wording and emotionalism, have a greater tendency to offer substantiation for their claims in comparison to the claims offered in other media by other types of people.

A source which provides interpretations of the effect of busing and which is almost always clouded to some degree in emotionalism is the newspaper editorial. An editorial by David Bryan, publisher of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, entitled "Invalid Arguments" serves as a good example.

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He first contends that any attempt to sway opinion is futile:

...many liberals...are attempting to discredit the fight against compulsory busing...It is impossible to persuade the defenders of busing to alter their views, but the effort should be made...

His first objection is that busing is implemented for sociological rather than educational purposes:

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...objections to busing can not be valid because buses have been used for decades to transport children to school...the flaw in this argument is that they make no distinction between necessary nonracial busing to unnecessary, racial busing...Foes of busing...object...to the imbecility and unfairness of compulsory busing that is designed to transport children for sociological not educational, purposes...

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He further objects to innocent children being used in this experimentation:

...busing is a temporary but necessary evil...one of the major objections to this view is that it is indifferent to the effect upon the lives of the children currently involved...it is cruel to even suggest that young children must suffer the hardship of busing today in order that young children will not have to suffer the hardship of busing tomorrow...

Finally, he attacks the often cited interpretation that critics of busing are racists:

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...opponents of busing are really segregationists who abhor the thought of black and white children going to school together...the primary purpose of this cynical argument is to...dissuade

moderates from joining the antibusing crusade...of course the argument is false...Undeniably, many busing opponents are segregationist but most surely are not.

It is evident while delineating some often voiced arguments for and against busing, the editorialist found his argument in eloquent rhetoric and not in substantiated fact.

A good example of the use of evidence in the refutation of anti-busing arguments has been presented by Marian Wright, a partner in the Washington Research Project. Using a question and answer format, she countered some of the allegations of the Nixon administration had made against the practice of busing as a means of implementing social change:

Q: Have they proved that busing is harmful either physically, psychologically, emotionally, or educationally?

A: No. The available evidence in fact shows that busing per se is none of these things. In fact, the opposite, seems to be true. Its widespread use attests to this...

Q: Have they proved that courts are ordering massive/excessive busing in desegregation cases?

A: No. No substantial increase in busing as a result of desegregation has been shown. Busing has been ordered to achieve desegregation...[and it] has been well within limits of state guidelines and practice...

Wright concludes her article with a recitation of the evidential sources that she uses for the foundation of the responses in the question and answer format.

Some of the most comprehensive statements have been generated by the formally organized pro and anti-busing groups; we shall look at four representative examples: the statement of Arthur Lynch who is a representative of the Black Parents Association of Charlotte, the official policy statement of the Concerned Citizens of Harrisburg, the statement of Edna Wade who is the President of the Unified Concerned Parents of Alabama, and finally, the

statement of Casey Jenkins, who is the spokesperson for the Concerned Parents Association of Nashville.

Lynch takes the approach of exploding "myths" which segregationists purportedly lay before the advancing progress of busing and integration.

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The myths are:

- (1) school districts are being subjected to massive busing.
- (2) transporting elementary school children is unsafe and harmful to their health.
- (3) some school districts are required to bear an unequal burden.
- (4) cost of busing prohibits school districts from adequately funding their instructional programs.
- (5) children must be transported substantially longer distances requiring additional hours of travel.

Voicing opinion that rejected these myths, Lynch responded that "...we know

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that none of these myths have any foundation in fact." In response he

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offers some evidence; turning first to the financial question he notes:

In our school system seven-tenths of 1 percent of the school budget is devoted to paying transportation costs incurred as a result of desegregation. It is impossible to believe that if this sum were added to the instructional program we would obtain a substantially better program than we have now.

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Responding then to the safety issue, he concludes:

In our school system, transporting elementary school children has not proved unsafe or harmful to their health. Indeed, the accident rate for children transported to school is less than one half the accident rate of children who walk to school. In our school system desegregation has resulted in a substantial reduction in the average distance children are bused and time in transit. Finally, our community has not been subjected to massive busing. Admittedly, the number of children being transported to school has increased but our system transports about 20 percent less than the state average...

Lynch also contends that the questions of the neighborhood school is moot

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in Charlotte due to the school board:

Incidentally, our school board has chosen to transport more children

than is necessary to accomplish desegregation. It has chosen to abandon the plan directed by the court and had adopted a plan of school organization designed to minimize the effect of desegregation on affluent white suburbs.

As a result several hundred additional children in the poorer black and white neighborhoods must be transported. Even so, the extent of busing in our community can not be fairly characterized as "massive."

Completing his statement, Lynch offered this analysis of the total impact

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busing has had upon Charlotte:

We do not say that desegregation, achieved in part through busing, has worked in our community that it will work everywhere. The fact that busing may prove to be infeasible in other more complex school systems, however, is no reason to re-segregation the black children of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. One of the more frequent segregationists myths in our community was that Charlotte-Mecklenburg was singled out to bear an unfair and unequal burden. This was and is nonsense. Today it is the obligation of all school boards, North and South, who have been operating illegally segregated schools to eradicate all vestiges of the dual school system. The promise can not be broken just because different techniques are needed in different school systems in order to desegregate...

In our community and similar communities elsewhere, it is clearly feasible to desegregate and to use busing as one tool to accomplish this goal. Given this basic fact, the only reasonable inference we can draw from all the proposed laws is that the nation is once again seeking to effectively prohibit black children from attending school with white children and impress upon the historical marks of segregation and inferiority upon yet another generation of black children.

Conversely, the Harrisburg Organization offered many reasons for opposing busing. The three main reasons were the destruction of the tax base, the failure of busing to bring about the desired goal of racial balance, and the gross deterioration in the quality of education to be found in the system as a result of the busing program. The reasons for the erosion of the tax base were "...those that could afford to move out of Harrisburg did...this is still going on and will continue until Harrisburg will have left only the very poor—black and white who are financially trapped and can't get out." On the issue of racial balance, the organization points out "...before

forced busing began, the ratio of white to blacks was approximately 65% to 35% white...it is estimated that by September, 1972, the ratio will be at least 70% black to 30% white." ⁵² As a measure of the equality of education, the Concerned Citizens of Harrisburg notes that "...before forced busing began, the quality of education was only fair at best... children who have had to transfer to other areas have had to receive special help to catch up to their grade level in their new school...and ⁵³ now the quality of education has deteriorated even further."

The other reasons offered by the Concerned Citizens of Harrisburg deal with specific effects to be seen within the Harrisburg School System. ⁵⁴ They include the deterioration of the total educational environment.

...many of the best teachers left...some teachers are visibly nervous—even having nervous breakdowns and being told by doctors not to return to these schools...student's schedules are unbalanced... the teachers have been told to just get through the year...even if the students did not learn much...standards have been lowered... fast and average learners are bored...students cut classes, roam the halls, or go home...

The article concludes with a comment that relates a time when the local school board chairman was queried as to the impact busing had upon the quality of education being received within the school district. He responded ⁵⁵ to the inquiry with a "none," shrugged his shoulders, and walked away.

The other organizational statements exemplify the type of rationales found in many statements of their type. The statement from Alabama simply lists seven arguments, while the statements from Tennessee also lists seven but gives an additional explanatory paragraph for each. The seven problems enumerated by the Alabama statement again deal primarily with finance, the impact upon the social atmosphere of the neighborhood, the ⁵⁶ seeming de-emphasis of education, and similar arguments:

- (1)...funds spent on busing are really wasted because the real goal of public schools is to educate all children, black and white...
- (2)...busing completely eliminates one of the most important phases of our school's programs...extra-curricular activities...
- (3)...this kind of busing discourages the interest of parents in participating in school activities...
- (4)...children have now become numbers to teachers and this completely terminates the custom of teacher visits to the child's home...
- (5)...the school is no longer the community center...
- (6)...one readily realizes that today our superhighways and city thoroughfares are being constantly improved for the purpose of speeding traffic and the constant increase in the number of vehicles. Where is safety?
- (7)...we speak of accountability. How can there be accountability on the part of those in the teaching profession when there is no way for parents and the taxpayer to be involved.

The Tennessee statement complements the above with a strict delineation of
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problems and substantiation for their existence. This list includes:

- (1) the destruction of the family structure.
- (2) staggered bus schedules create hardships.
- (3) children have most interest in learning.
- (4) the goal of quality education for all, rather than being achieved has resulted in mediocrity for all.
- (5) a complete break down of discipline within the schools.
- (6) busing has increased the belief that the minority race is inferior.
- (7) busing has further separated the people from the government.

The type of evidence offered in support of the preceding objections is
exemplified by the addendum which expresses their concern over the decrease
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in educational opportunity:

there has been an immense decrease in the number of available courses, qualified instructors, time spent in instruction, time actually spent in classrooms, field trips, homework, and motivation for superior or even average achievement. This has produced lethargy in the children.

The discussion concludes with the comment that "...the middle class is being hurt by...the actions of their government which takes the fruit of their labor...and in addition if you take their children by forced busing you will have destroyed them and the greatest system of government in the history of civilization."⁵⁹

Many social scientists have speculated as to the causes of the attitudes so widely adopted by the public. An excellent example of such thought can be found in the work of Professor Thomas Pettigrew, a social psychologist at Harvard University. Pettigrew addresses three major charges leveled at busing: it is harmful and unsafe, it destroys the neighborhood school, and it adversely affects the achievement of white children while not being of any benefit to Negro children. Speaking on the issue of safety, Pettigrew⁶⁰ declares:

...the Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission has recently found that within that state over a recent five year period children were over three times safer per mile riding than walking to school.

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Turning next to the neighborhood school concept, he states:

...the so-called neighborhood school appears to be less an educational asset than a parental convenience...the great majority of American school children do not attend institutions that can be reasonably described as "neighborhood schools." ...Nor do I know of any rigorous evidence that supports the sweeping claims made for such schools since the advent of public school desegregation in 1954.

Pettigrew's final point concerns the impact that integration has upon achievement. He directs his discussion along two lines: (1) it is a mistake to necessarily define integration as integration across racial lines rather it should be thought of as a process by which economic classes are mingled, and (2) most of the evidence which has been generated from studies comparing systems which integrate on the basis of social and economic

status rather than on the basis of race indicate:

children of all backgrounds tend to do better in schools with a pre-dominantly middle-class milieu; and this trend is especially true in the later grades where the full force of peer-group influence is felt...

The summary of his article discredits the safety issue, the validity of the "neighborhood school" concept, and the argument of deteriorating achievement due to integration.

THE MODEL

From our review of the available commentary which attempts to delineate the various effects busing has had upon the student, the school, and the community there emerge four major categories in which the perceived effects of busing might be classified. The four categories are: (1) the neighborhood school concept; (2) the educational benefit concept; (3) the social experimentation concept; and finally, (4) busing used as a symbol for racism.

Underlying the neighborhood school concept are two questions: Whether or not the school in closest proximity to a student's home has an intrinsic educational value that another school farther away from home lacks?; and, Whether or not there is a historical tradition within our society which has made the neighborhood school a cherished institution around which the community develops? An impression has been created that busing by its nature is antithetical to the neighborhood school concept.

The second category, the educational benefit concept, also includes two important questions: Does busing and integration really improve the academic achievement of the minority children? or Does busing and integration prove to be a futile effort with little impact upon academic achievement? Arguments providing affirmative answers to both questions have been offered.

Busing as a social experiment, the third category, appears to some critics to have been the prime motivation for the development of busing as an instrument of desegregation. These individuals contend that the proponents of busing are more concerned with experimenting with social relationships than they are with the educational benefit to be derived from the program.

A final category involves consideration of the degree to which racism influences the public's perception of busing. In addition, it is necessary to consider the question of whether or not the bus is but a symbol which is attacked. Many contend that the fervor over the use of busing is a function of a latent racism which has been redirected from the hated race to the more visible symbol of the emergence of that race; namely, the school bus.

I suggest that the factors involved in these four categories seem to give rise to the public's perception of the impact of busing and their reaction to it. In addition, I hope that further study may some day reveal the historical factors which created the degree of concern over these issues in the public's mind that I've noted.

A MODEL FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PUBLIC'S
PERCEPTION OF THE IMPACT OF BUSING



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